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Indian River County Sheriff's deputy charged with possession of child porn

By Lamaur Stancil

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Stephen Thomas

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY — An Indian River County Sheriff's Office deputy has been charged with possession of child pornography after several videos were found on his personal laptop computer by detectives.

Stephen Guy Thomas Jr., 26, was charged late Tuesday night with the crime, Sheriff's Office spokesman Deputy Jeff Luther said.

patrol car. The initial forensic search of children as young as 5 years old in a variety of images, the report said. Detectives searched his patrol car for the laptop after they could not find it in his home, Luther said.

Luther said detectives who routinely investigate child pornography came across a computer screen name that led to Thomas, who has been a road patrol deputy for the past few years. Thomas would not have been involved in conducting child porn investigations by the Sheriff's Office, Luther said.

Thomas has been suspended without pay pending the Sheriff's Office investigation, Luther said. He was being held at the Indian River County Jail in lieu of \$150,000 bail. Thomas was being housed in the general



Stephen Thomas

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population of the jail with no special accommodations, Luther said.

Thomas joined the Sheriff's Office in 2005 following more than four years with the Army, where he served in special operations and had a few missions in Iraq, according to his personnel file. When he applied to become a deputy, he received recommendations from his superiors in the Army, as well as from his local church.

His disciplinary record showed only a handful of investigations, with one written reprimand for failing to show up for court in December 2006.

Thomas recently had been staying in a security house at Rosewood Magnet School, said Patty Vasquez, spokeswoman for the Indian River County School District.

School officials said they were not aware until Wednesday he had moved into the house.

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